

Sickle Cell Program Medical Alert

SICKLE CELL MEDICAL ALERT

How do I know when to take my baby to the doctor?

Symptoms to watch for are as follows:

- Temperature of 101°F (38.4°C) and above (may be a sign of serious infection)
- Swollen hands and feet
- Problem with breathing (faster or slower than normal)
- Frequent coughing, vomiting, and diarrhea
- Fewer wet diapers (sign of dehydration)
- Cranky, cries more than usual, and screams when touched
- Pain that will not go away with over-the-counter medication
- Sluggish, tired, and little or no energy
- Any sudden weakness or loss of feeling (may be a sign of a stroke)
- Pale, grayish-looking lips and/or skin
- Jaundiced or yellowish eyes and skin
- Extended belly (a result of the blood getting into the spleen and holding)
- Unusual headache
- Priapism (painful erection that will not go away)
- Sudden vision change
- Stomach pain (could be a sign of gallstones)

Other things to watch out for:

Sickle cell patients should be under the care of a medical team that understands sickle cell disease.

- Daily penicillin from 2 months old until age 6 to prevent serious infection.
- Many children with sickle cell anemia are put on folic acid. Check with your doctor to see if your child needs this.
- A good and balanced diet is very important, especially for babies with sickle cell disease.
- Make sure the baby drinks plenty of fluids.
- The baby should be kept at a comfortable temperature without becoming too cold or too hot.
- Avoid overexertion and stress when playing with other children.
- Ensure the baby gets plenty of rest.
- Any symptom that does not appear to be normal for your child means the child should be seen immediately by a doctor for medical evaluation.
- Regular checkups from knowledgeable health care providers is important.
- A clean environment may prevent infection. This should be kept in mind at all times when raising children with sickle cell disease since they are more susceptible to infections.